

Washington, DC -- U.S. Rep. Vern Buchanan told President Obama today that he respected the new President's willingness to come to Capitol Hill to meet with Republicans on the proposed \$825 billion economic stimulus bill.

"I told him that I appreciated his bipartisan spirit and reaching out across party lines," Buchanan said following their conversation at the Capitol. "I think it demonstrates a level of sincerity in trying to put aside the unproductive partisanship of the past to do what's right for America's future."

Buchanan's one-on-one meeting with the President followed an hour-long appearance by Obama before the 178 Republican members of the House. After the meeting ended, Buchanan approached the new President to thank him for appearing before the group. "I joked with him that I don't see him anymore at the Capitol Hill gym we used to work out at when he was a member of the Senate," said Buchanan. "He told me to come on down and work out with him at his new gym (in the White House.)"

Buchanan said he also spoke personally with Obama's top White House Economic Adviser, Lawrence Summers, the director of the National Economic Council. The Congressman told Summers one of the keys to turning around Florida's economy was addressing the problem of too much inventory of foreclosed houses. Summers assured Buchanan that the Obama administration, particularly newly confirmed Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner, was developing a plan to address that specific problem.

Obama came to Capitol Hill today to sell his \$825 billion economic stimulus package that will be voted on by the House Wednesday. Buchanan said that while he respected the President for reaching out to Republicans, he remained troubled by the massive size of the spending bill, the largest in history.

"This package is the largest single spending bill in history and there is no question that it will explode the budget deficit as well as the national debt," Buchanan said. "A lot of this spending will do very little to create jobs or jump start the economy, such as \$600 million to buy new cars for the federal government or \$275 million to upgrade computers at the State Department."

The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office says only 20 percent of the \$825 billion will be spent this year.